

ROMALEA GUTTATA (HOULTUYN), NAME CHANGE FOR WELL-KNOWN "EASTERN LUBBER GRASSHOPPER" (ORTHOPTERA: ROMALEIDAE)¹

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The "Eastern lubber grasshopper," so called, for example, in the latest revision of the list of "Common Names of Insects and Related Organisms" published by the Entomological Society of America (Sutherland, 1978), is known almost universally throughout schools and colleges all over North America, though its natural distribution is restricted to the southeastern United States. Because it is a very large insect that is frequently available in very large numbers, it is one of the "type" arthropods for biology classes and, as such, is among those animals widely sold by biological supply houses. For a very long time the insect has been called *Romalea* (sometimes incorrectly *Rhomalea*) *microptera*. The specific part of the name is attributable to Palisot de Beauvois (1805-21). The name appeared in his work as *Acridium micropteron* (on p. 146, and in Orthoptères pl. IV, fig. 4), and is usually cited as dating from 1805, even by Rehn and Grant (1961: 253). The year 1805 is, however, that for the issue of only the first two of the fifteen "livraisons" that made up the work (they are dated "An. XIV", according to the French Revolutionary calendar — the only parts to use this — and they may not have appeared until 1806, as some maintain). In fact, parts of the work continued to appear until 1821 (after Palisot's death), and the one with which we are here concerned (Livraison 9), was not published until 1817 (Griffin, 1937).

There are thus two available senior synonyms for *Romalea microptera*. The first is "*Gryllus (Locustae) Guttatus*" proposed by Houttuyn (1813: Register to Vol. 2, p. 12) in his completed edition of Caspar Stoll's "*Natuurlijke en naar het leven nauwkeurige gekleurde Afbeeldingen en Beschrijvingen der Spoken, Wandelende Bladen, Zabel-Springhaanen, etc.*", the first parts of which appeared much earlier; it refers to Stoll's original "Trek-Springhaanen" (Stoll, 1787-88: 23 and pl. Xb, fig. 34). The other is *Dictyophorus reticulatus* of Thunberg (1815: 259). There is no doubt that both of these names apply to the same species as Palisot's *Acridium micropteron*, and a name change is therefore unavoidable under the rule of priority. Indeed, Blanchard (1840: 40), long ago, gave the name

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guttata precedence over *microptera*, whether or not he consciously did so on the basis of publication date. He was not followed by others.

Although the Eastern lubber grasshopper is so widely known as *Romalea microptera*, it is scarcely possible to plead a case to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature for the retention of this name on the grounds that the senior synonyms are *nomina oblita*, for both have been cited as supposedly junior synonyms comparatively recently (Rehn and Grant, *loc. cit.*). Nor is there a case on the grounds that confusion would result from the use of the valid prior name, for the genus is monotypic. The only basis for arguing for retention of *Romalea microptera* would be stability of nomenclature in the case of a well known species. Even then, the case would not seem to be strong, for the amount of literature on the species (as contrasted with the number of people who are familiar with it) is, surprisingly, rather limited.

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